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FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3040
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEHAK/USDAO ANKARA TU PRIORITY
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RUEUITH/ODC ANKARA TU PRIORITY
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RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK PRIORITY
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY
RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RHMFISS/425ABS IZMIR TU//CC// PRIORITY
RHMFISS/39ABG INCIRLIK AB TU PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 001852

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TAGS: [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [TU](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: ON THE EVE OF TURKEY'S ELECTION - PKK VIOLENCE
DOWN AND NO CROSS-BORDER OPERATION...YET

REF: A. ANKARA 1840

[B](#). ANKARA 1803

[C](#). ANKARA 1791

[D](#). ANKARA 1651

Classified By: Political Counselor Janice G. Weiner for reasons 1.4.(b)
and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) As Turks prepare to vote this Sunday, July 22, they do so following a campaign dominated in part by the ongoing terrorist activities of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), coupled with claims by the nationalist opposition that ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) efforts to counter that threat have been insufficient. A scenario that seemed all but inevitable a month ago -- a cross-border operation (CBO) by Turkish forces into northern Iraq targeting PKK encampments there -- has not occurred. Barring a massive precipitating terrorist attack in the next two days, it seems unlikely Turkish forces will carry out a CBO prior to the election.

[1](#)2. (C) Terrorist incidents and casualty figures have decreased in the first two weeks of July (refs a and c). Violent clashes that were occurring unabated in May and June (ref d), while not coming to a halt in July, have diminished substantially in recent weeks. To be clear, there is no evidence that the PKK has kept to the ceasefire that it generally observed from September 2006 until May 2007. The PKK has carried out bomb attacks against Turkish rail targets and Turkish security personnel have been killed by PKK-planted IEDs this month. But compared to May and June when casualty figures were in the scores and clashes between terrorists and GOT security personnel numbered over 40 each month, July has been relatively quiet.

[1](#)3. (C) We cannot determine whether the comparative calm is attributable to the PKK deciding to lie low in the face of a massive counterterrorist security presence in Turkey's southeast or to a calculation that prospects for an eventual political accommodation between the GOT and PKK (if indeed that is what the PKK seeks) are best served by a strong showing by the AKP or Democratic Society Party (DTP) independents in Sunday's polls. Regardless of the reason, the lack of a high-profile, mass-casualty attack since the May 22 Ankara bombing has allowed both TGS and the AKP-led

government to avoid giving a green light to a military response, which we believe senior decisionmakers in both institutions worry would be of limited operational utility and carry a disproportionate level of risk.

¶4. (C) This calculus may change after the election. TGS maintained pressure on AKP throughout the campaign by asserting the utility of a CBO, but did not insist on actually carrying it out. As a result, the opposition consistently hounded AKP as being soft on terrorism. In the post-election period, that motive will have disappeared and there may be a renewed push from the military to take action. However, for now, it seems elections will occur in relative peace.

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